[RUSSIA TO-DAY.—See Pages 1255 and 1256.

THE WORKERS'

DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

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THE PROMISED NEW WORLD.

KURT EISNER.

At the Berne Labour and Socialist Conference Kurt Eisner said: "If militarism is to be abolished we must begin with youth. Already before the war a new spirit was growing which, however, was choked by the militarist spirit. We must establish the atmosphere in which this new spirit can freely grow."

Declaring for the abolition of all military service, he said: "The new spirit will spring up all over the world, it will have to fight against terrible censorship and dictatorship."

Picture postcards are being lavishly sent out free from His Majesty's Stationery Office; their subjects include: "When Baby's teeth come give him crusts to strengthen them"; "Fresh air and exercise are good for baby"—which shows the mother putting her child to play in a country cottage garden—and "Look here, upon this picture, and on this." Here is shown a crowded kitchen, in which there is a big bed in which a baby is asleep, and where a woman is ironing, and a man and some children are having a meal. Beside it is another picture, in which the door and window are open, the children are outside, the baby is in a small cot, and the woman nicely dressed is at tea with the man. The people are apparently prosperous, whereas in the other picture they looked very poor. The transformation, according to the inscription on the card, is supposed to have been wrought by putting the baby in a separate bed, covering the milk, having a fireguard, removing rubbish, opening the window, and sending the children to play outside. The bed has disappeared. Has the family decided to do without one? Evidently the family has acquired another room, but the picture postcard does not tell us where the money is to be found to pay the rent. The fire has ceased to smoke: did the fireguard accomplish that? No, the landlord has perhaps provided a new fire grate or put a cowl on the chimney, but how are we to induce him to do that? The woman has suddenly ceased to be overworked. Evidently she has got new clothes and put the washing out—will the Ministry of Health pay for that? The Government is forcing us to pay for these postcards to be given away free; but what are the postcards for? Evidently Mr. Lloyd George has found that the "new world" he promised is too expensive and has decided to give us these postcards instead. That they are very inartistic and badly drawn need not surprise us.

LETTERS CARRIED FREE IN RUSSIA.

The Soviet Government of Russia has decreed that from January 1st, 1919, letters and postcards weighing less than 15 grammes shall be carried free of charge. No charge is to be made for letters and parcels dispatched by Soviet institutions.

No charge will be made for carrying postcards sent to Russia from other countries, and the People's Commissariat for Posts and Telegraphs is instructed to propose to foreign states that postcards and letters not exceeding 15 grammes in weight should be carried to or from Soviet Russia without charge.

THE GERMAN REVOLUTION.

The general strike and the Spartacus attacks have forced the German Government to agree to the Socialisation of industry and the inclusion of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in the Constitution. Exactly what relationship the Council will bear to the Constituent Assembly and the Government itself is not stated. These concessions show that the Socialist Revolution is near to success and the concessions are made by the Government in the hope of regaining enough popular support to enable it to defeat the Spartacists.

* * *

In Vienna people are dying of a mysterious epidemic which they call "bone-softening: its cause is starvation."

TORTURING THE C.O.s. By Guy Aldred.

What Forcible Feeding Means.

The Government re-arrested Harding, one of the Wandsworth hunger strikers, and apparently attempted to forcibly feed him. It was compelled to release him owing to twelve other men going on hunger strike. Dutch, one of Harding's fellow "mice," who returned to prison on hearing of Harding's re-arrest, was released at the same time, not temporarily, but permanently. Apparently Harding is to be arrested yet again. And then there are the Winchester men. Under these circumstances I wish, in the columns of The Dreadnought, to call attention to the history of forcible feeding.

Crime is an economic question. So is the prison despotism which affects to cure it. And it is so in more ways than one. Every warder is open to corruption and the Home Office toadies to rank. In the fall of 1909, that reactionary son of the hypocritical G.O.M. of Hawarden, Home Secretary Gladstone, sanctioned the process of forcible feeding. I am proud to have stood in the dock about this time and to have been found guilty of sedition by a jury of nondescript shopkeepers, partly for ridiculing Gladstone's willingness bombastically to settle everything by saying he took full responsibility. When a man wars against the ashes of Dhingra as this mediocrity did, his "responsibility" tends to become a public scandal. Apparently, even the Government thought so, and transferred him to Africa accordingly. However, this worthless politician inaugurated forcible feeding, and the first victim was Mrs. Mary Leigh. Her experiences will serve as an index to the sufferings which are falling to the lot of C.O.s to-day, after nearly three years' imprisonment. They illustrate the terrible penalties inflicted for something like thirteen months upon Ribiero, the Manchester C.O., whom the Government had to release after repeated arrests, releases, and re-arrests.

Mrs. Mary Leigh was pinioned by having her arms and legs held down, and her head was forced backwards. An india-rubber tube was then inserted through the nose or mouth, and pushed down the throat. At the end of the tube was a cup, through which liquid was poured. Perhaps the chaplain was looking on, in case he was required to read the burial service. That would be in accord with his duties. It was established subsequently by the testimony of leading medical men that, in the case of sane, conscious, and unwilling patients, this feeding by force does not nourish the victims. It is consequently not only futile, but brutal and dangerous, being an attempt to undermine a starved stomach. Describing the process, Mrs. Leigh said:—

"The sensation is most painful. The drums of the ears seem to be bursting. There is a horrible pain in the throat and breast, with noises in the head. It made my eyes gush out with water, and I was horribly sick. The after-effects are a feeling of faintness, a sense of extreme pain in the breast bones, and a noise in the ears."

At the time of writing, I expect, but am not sure, that my comrade Thiel, a re-arrested "mouse" from Twickenham, is enduring this torture in Wandsworth. During my recent Glasgow lectures, I was informed that some of my Scotch C.O. comrades are undergoing this agony. And by the time these lines are in print I expect to be re-arrested myself,* and to be, enjoying a like experience.

Remember, that the Government has for three years endeavoured, by a continuous prison persecution, to break down my health and to destroy my power of resistance. It has placed me in a filthy semi-underground cell for several months, without books, letters, or visits. But my constitution is virile. The attempt to destroy me has failed. And so it must needs pursue these tactics. Suffering with me, in various prisons, will be other comrades, possessed of like firmness of endurance, like determination, like constitutional vigour. Are these characteristics criminal? Does their possession argue a justification for such persecution? Is it the will of the workers that these tortures should continue?

Let me cite once more from the past to show that this indictment of forcible feeding and prison treatment is no extravaganza, but a sober statement of fact. In November, 1910, Mr. Hugh Franklin was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment in the second division for deliberately and intentionally assaulting Mr. Churchill. Thirteen months later, Mr. McDougall was convicted of an unpremeditated and, consequently, unintentional assault on Mr. Lloyd George. McDougall was only eighteen and Lloyd George received no injury whatever. It was thought, consequently, that McDougall would receive a light sentence. Instead of this, he was sent to hard labour for two months. The difference

* [The writer was arrested at Clapham Common on Sunday, March 9th.

Continued on page 1258.

THE SOLDIER and THE WAR.

The following passages comprise one of six fragments appearing in the "Dreadnought" from a novel by Dudley Howard Tripp, a young soldier who enlisted early in the war and here records his impressions.

III.

....Ten days are over and we are not relieved. We are probably in for another five. I have no words to tell my misery. The damp has eaten into my very soul and taken away the last shreds of my courage.

Days pass now without a laugh or song Why should we laugh or sing? The succeeding dawns bring nothing new—the darkness ushers in no rest. Something made of terror and despair, one seems to be pounding away at my brain. It reminds me of the asphalt I have seen beaten into the roads at home, till the surface is flat and level and, one might say, dead. My brain is being stamped in the same way, all its fibres crushing and grinding and solidifying....

Yet still, there is the pulse of pain, the harried feeling of pursuit by merciless forces. Sometimes a sharp 'light' seems to rush through me from my eyes and leave me dazed. I am going to be ill. If I believed in God I'd pray to be ill.

* * *

....Fifteen days now, under almost unbroken fire. The guns are still enfilading us. We have to *crawl* from fire bay to fire bay. Still we are allowed no fires, no hot food....

Flynn, poor beggar, is a wreck. His eyes are sunken and great hollows are in his cheeks, the bones stand out in sharp ridges. We have not spoken to one another, I think, for three days.

Donoghue is still worse. He crouches on the firestep like a starved and dying animal. There is no light in his eyes and his hands shake like those of an old man.

It rains continuously....

* * *

Oh! I have never been so glad in my life! We are quitting to-night. Flynn looked at me, grinned and straightened his equipment. To hear this is in the nature of a death sentence reprieve. I have never known such a longing for rest and peace and sleep, and for a drop of hot tea to rinse my tongue. The thought runs through my body and brain like good, red wine. It revives hope and life, makes the world look almost decent again....

* * *

We have to stay! Orders are cancelled. Do you know what I feel, can you imagine my disappointment. It is too cruel, too cruel....

There is talk of a German attack. The wires are cut. New troops, ignorant of the sector would be useless for defence, so they say. But we—— are we fit to fight? After eighteen days on broken biscuit and jam—we whose company fighting strength is thirty instead of two hundred?....

We may well ask why we volunteered, well ask what our country cares now that we are in her clutches. Our poor cracked voices never reach England, our staring eyes never glimpse it: and who but a coward, going home on leave, would add to the anxiety and terror of mother and sister by describing the *real* soul of war. War is seen through a mask: none across the sea knows its true face. Could I tell my mother now, that I am expecting death from hour to hour, that the fibres of control are so eaten away that I can no longer face it with the soldier spirit of which one reads so much: that terror, sickly terror is tapping, tapping at the gates of my reason: incoherent fear rusting my very vitals? Am I to tell her that all my love, all nobility, all self-effacing generosity has left my heart, and that I am a beast grubbing in the clay for a degrading and miserable life?....

Ah! Why should I die when I am young! Why should blood be the price my youth pays for its beauty; and its strength be chained to the service of murder and lust?

Is any law, or reason, or love hidden in the tangled madness of such a web? Where is the brow of Christ beneath such thorns!

* * *

Waiting, waiting, waiting....they are blowing us to hell.

The dust, and acrid powder stench is choking. All our faces are black with clay and smoke. The whole line seems to be rocking and quivering beneath the blows of the shell.

It must finish soon: God! it must finish soon! ....Flynn wipe that blood off your face! you're splashed all over. Don't look at me like that! Is it *your* blood?....

Up into the Hell! What does it matter? The very air is trembling: the light is bad.....

I can see no one, nothing. My rifle's hot, my hands are shaking and jumping so that I can scarcely hold a cartridge....The guns are lifting to the rear, the dust is less thick....Out in the dusk, strange moving figures seem to rise from the ground. Grey-coated guards! Lead, lead.... Pump it in to them; no stopping; no stopping. They're coming on still, still....

Out of the trench! No use meeting them down in the pit. Level terms Grey-coats! Steel and blood and madness. They are through the wires, crowding on us, hundreds of them, on, and on, and on. Hold fast! Oh, Christ Almighty, Hold fast! It's mad, all mad....Ah!....Oh! Christ have pity....

Dudley Howard Tripp.

BETWEEN OURSELVES. By L. A. Motler.

Unemployment seems to be as catching as the 'flu, so I was not very much surprised when my friend Joe came to me with his ghastly secret. He explained, between sobs, that he had had a kind of disagreement with the kind-hearted capitalist. The eventual result of this was that, after filling up several forms at the Labour Exchange, and producing his birth certificate and tatoo-marks, my friend Joe was entitled to draw the princely sum of twenty-nine shillings a week.

Now when you have been riotously living on three pounds a week, you do not find life all butter and honey (controlled) on twenty-nine bob, so Joe had been around some places for a kinder master. One of the latter had offered to take him on, provided he joined the Union. And here Joe was to ask me to come round to the Union offices. And by "Union" he did not mean the Spike.

We passed up the porphyry and emerald steps of the Union offices and applied our faces to a pigeon-hole marked "Enquiries." The pigeon inside disclaimed all knowledge of our mission and referred us higher up. There was a door marked "General Secretary: Enquiries," so we walked in. The General Secretary's plumber's mate said the One and Only was not in at present and referred us back to the pigeon hole. We explained that Mr. Pigeon had disowned us and cut us out of his will. With an impatient shrug, he led us gently but firmly down the passage, and an altercation ensued. The Union rules were looked up, and as we did not agree with the description of any desperate characters, we were finally allowed to take a form with us. "Fill that up and bring it on Tuesday at ten to seven," said Mr. Pigeon.

We did not need nearly a week in order to fill up a form giving details of all Joe's last employers, but a Union is a Union, registered by Act of Parliament. And rules is rules. So the following Tuesday we turned up at the Union offices with a fitting reverence and the form clasped devotedly in Joe's hand. We were ushered with mysterious solemnity down to the basement into a room filled with members and demobs and smoke. We were invited to take a seat on a bench—and wait. A beautiful framed specimen of writing by the office boy informed us in pure English that "Conveniences for expectoration were provided on the floor," and members were invited to use them whilst waiting for the Secretary to attend to them.

After we had exhausted the beauties of the distempered walls, and were religiously battling against sleep, Joe's name was called and both of us took our places in a queue drawn up on the stairs leading to the offices. As one by one the men entered the fateful chamber, we were gradually moved one stair up at a time. At last our turn came.

Mr. Pigeon had a list with Joe's name on, and there was an ominous interrogation mark against it. I wondered what terrible crime Joe had committeed since I last saw him.

"Have you got your form with you?" Mr. Pigeon asked Joe. Joe admitted the soft impeachment. He handed it over—the form I mean. The Pigeon's feathers ruffled, and he emitted a long-drawn agonised "A-ah!"

"This should have been handed in at five o'clock," he said.

I supported Joe's statement that Mr. Pigeon had distinctly told us to bring it at ten to seven.

"It should have been handed in at five o'clock," said the Pigeon, now become a parrot.

"Well, you've got it there," said I.

"The rules is that it has to be handed——"

"What do you want to make all that fuss for! You've got the form there, isn't it properly filled in?" asked Joe.

"The Secretary," Mr. Pigeon-Parrot explained patiently, "has to have the form handed in at five o'clock, and transferred——"

"Well, the Secretary is here now, isn't he! You can easily transfer it to him right away."

The old bird shrugged his shoulders at such crass ignorance of Union procedure.

"It has to be discussed," said he.

"Discuss it now," said Joe, "whilst you are all there."

The feathers ruffled again with supreme contempt.

"It has to be handed in at five o'clock and then transferred. The Secretary and Branch Committee——"

"Oh, blow the Branch Committee!" exclaimed Joe, "it seems to me all a lot of red tape."

"It is," assented a demobilised soldier in the queue behind us.

"Well, you see how it is——," the pigeon began, when an important-looking person, with a fountain pen held dangerously in his hands, looked out of a door marked "Private."

"What's the row about?"

Mr. Pigeon trembled. The awful truth might give Mr. Importance a shock. He just managed to stutter it out. The fountain pen waggled ominously, then the holder spoke:

"Come round again with the form on Tuesday next and hand it in at five o'clock; it will then be transferred and——"

But Joe had collapsed.

THE PORTSMOUTH SOCIALIST SCHOOL.

The Portsmouth Socialist School was started by the local W.S.F. and is supported by other Socialist organisations. The school is running most successfully and the local comrades are hoping shortly to build a permanent school. A building fund has been started and the secretary of the Building Committee, H. Ireton, 57, Cardigan Road, Kingston, Portsmouth, Hants., urgently appeals for donations.

IMPRISONED FOR FLYING THE RED FLAG IN AUSTRALIA.

Mrs. Jennie Baines, well known in this country as a fighter for freedom, was in December arrested with Mrs. Jane Aarons for flying the Red Flag at meetings at Yassa Bank, Melbourne, Australia. The women declared that as Socialists they were proud to fly the Red Flag and did not believe it illegal to do so. They were fined and ordered to enter into a bond not to fly the Red Flag again. In default Mrs. Baines was to go to prison for 14 days, Mrs. Aarons for 7. Of course they refused to sign the bond. H. R. Long received the savage sentence of 6 months' imprisonment for the same "offence."

MAXIM LITVINOFF ON SOVIET RUSSIA.

Extracts from two letters on the situation in Russia, addressed by M. Litvinoff, former Russian plenipotentiary in London, to an American correspondent at the end of January and the middle of December last. The January letter being of a more recent date is printed first :—

I.

....Since my last letter a good deal has changed. The authority of the Soviets has extended in every direction. The Lettish Communists have firmly established themselves in Lettia, the Lithuanian Communists have occupied the greater part of Lithuania, and the Ukrainian Communists have captured almost all the big towns with the exception of Kieff, such as Kharkoff, Poltava, Ekaterinoslaff, Tchernigoff, &c. The Petliurians are impotent and may sell themselves at any moment to the Entente just as they previously sold themselves to Germany. The Esthonians alone have had bad luck. They did not possess sufficient forces to retain the districts which they had recaptured, while the Russian Soviets refrained from sending troops there in order not to provoke Finland to war. Measures, however, have been taken to prevent the Esthonian and Finnish White Guards from proceeding beyond the present front. In the East, after the capture of Orenburg and Ufa, we are expecting the fall of Zlatoust. The defeat at Perm, which has been so much exaggerated abroad, was scarcely noticed in Russia. There, as in Esthonia, it was a case of treachery on the part of the commanders. In the South, General Krasnoff is idling his time away. It is said that his army has melted away. In Siberia the workers and peasants do not cease to rebel.

The committee of the Constituent Assembly proposed to the Soviet Government an alliance for joint action against Koltchak. Tchernoff, who had fled from Koltchak to Ufa, has received permission to return to Moscow. The Mensheviki, too, have re-emerged, but continue to chant their dirges. A new conspiracy of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries has been detected, but of a local character. Lenin is trying to unite all the Socialist parties which recognise the Soviet régime, but down below, among the masses, the Mensheviki and Socialist-Revolutionaries inspire great distrust.

The army continues to grow, and in a couple of months will amount to several millions.

Thanks to imports from the Ukraine, the food situation at Moscow has lost its acuteness, but there is little fuel, and the people are suffering exceedingly from cold. At Petrograd even the food situation is very bad. The reports about disturbances are lies.

We are ready to make peace with the Allies and make them financial concessions. We accept, in principle, the proposal of the Paris Conference, but we insist upon a more central spot for the gathering.

The Allied blockade is condemning the country to starvation and cold. The Scandinavian countries have broken with us very unwillingly, yielding to the pressure of the Allies who presented them with an ultimatum. Owing to this rupture, we are unable to import from Denmark vegetable seeds to the amount of 40,000,000 roubles which we had bought there and paid for in cash. We cannot import agricultural implements and machines from Sweden; and the British have forbidden them to export even paper to Russia. A large quantity of flax bought by the Swedes in Russia and conveyed from Petrograd in Russian bottoms was seized by the British at Reval and taken to British ports. We are being strangled and deprived of the possibility of bettering the internal conditions, and yet it is we who are made responsible for the consequences. Neutral countries are being forced to boycott us, and then the fact is used as proof of our wickedness....

II.

....The decisive factors in the situation at present are: (1) the complete collapse of the counter-revolution and the disappearance of opposition inside the country, and (2) the formation of a large, efficient, and well-disciplined new army. Whatever view one may take of the activity of the Extraordinary Commissions (for Fighting the Counter-Revolution, Speculation, and Sabotage), they are entitled to the credit of having succeeded, within a short time, in clearing Russia of all the most active counter-revolutionary and conspiring elements. This has been achieved not so much by physical extermination, as by the intimidation of the bourgeoisie. The big capitalists, monarchists, and Socialist-Revolutionaries of the Right, choosing the better part of valour, have, for the most part, sought safety in flight choosing the Ukraine, Finland, and foreign countries as the fields for their intrigues. In Russia itself, apart from small riots which sporadically break out in isolated villages in connection with the mobilisation, or under the influence of the agitation of reactionaries from outside, there have of late been no conspiracies and no rebellions. These have been speedily and peaceably coped with for the most part. The most important revolt during the last three months was the action of some 500 sailors in Petrograd, but that bore more the character of a protest demonstration. The ring-leaders were shot at the instance of the demonstrators themselves.

The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who, up to the time of the German Revolution, had been indulging in lachrymose plaints about the "Brest noose," have now calmed down and for the most part fused with the Communist party in virtue of a decision of their central committee. The Menshevik Central Committee is appealing for the support of the Soviet Government and for a fight against the counter-revolution, though it repeats, to save appearances, the helpless twaddle about the Constituent Assembly. Even the Jewish Bund is, individually and collectively, migrating into our camp. Of the Internationalists and the "Novaya Zhizn" group scarcely anything need be said. They have for a long time past been working conscientiously in Soviet institutions. Gorki and Andreyeva [his wife] have unreservedly joined us, confining their criticisms to the little details of the big machine.

Among the workers the influence of the Communist Party is no longer disputed with the exception of one or two factories in Petrograd and in a few provincial towns, where the Mensheviki have entrenched themselves. At the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in November, which was attended by more than a thousand delegates, the combined opposition only commanded about a dozen votes, and even those were silent.

As for the villagers, their frame of mind is best illustrated by the recent congress of the Poverty Committees of the Union of Northern Communes, which was attended, beyond expectation, by no fewer than 16,000 delegates. A suggestion to form a model regiment of 4,000 from among the members of the congress was met by the immediate offer to enrol on the part of 6,000 delegates. Altogether, the formation of the Poverty Committees in the villages has proved a successful measure. These committees are waging a successful battle with the village vultures and the rich who had contrived to entrench themselves in the village Soviets of the old type. But the rich peasants, too, are hostile, not so much to the Soviet Government as to the collection of taxes.

Mobilisation is proceeding almost everywhere pretty successfully. The peasants gather at the various centres without any compulsion whatsoever. The idea of the necessity of actively protecting the People's Government is striking deep roots.....

The food supply has greatly improved, but is still defective, partly on account of the difficulties of transport, but also in part owing to the dishonesty of the above-mentioned elements. Bread, however, is supplied to the towns pretty regularly, while other articles of consumption, such as tea, sugar, butter, &c., are distributed only now and then, when sufficient quantities reach the towns. In the corn-growing provinces, the number of which has of late considerably increased, thanks to the clearing-out of the Czecho-Slovaks from the Volga, the peasants supply the elevators with sufficient quantities of grain, but the further transport to the capitals still leaves much to be desired. Illicit self-provisioning has been suppressed, yet the rich bourgeoisie still contrives to obtain absolutely everything for money. All the restaurants have been closed, and in their place public kitchens have been opened where the population can get coupon dinners, far from luxurious and not always satisfying. Their number is still insufficient, and queues, unfortunately, are not of rare occurrence. The shops, too, are almost all closed or nationalised, and all articles, as well as foodstuffs, are distributed by the food committees among the district centres, whence they are delivered to the house committees. Prices are fixed for everything, and are, comparatively speaking, not high. Bread, for instance, is sold at Moscow at 60 kopecks (1s. 3d. at pre-war rates) a pound, while the bourgeoisie pays, by buying from illegal traders, 10 roubles (£1 at pre-war rates) a pound. The same ratio between the fixed and free prices holds good in the case of all other articles. It is clear that the more ruthlessly illicit trading and illicit self-provisioning are suppressed the more products will be available for the public stores to distribute among the people at reasonable prices. I had occasion—involuntarily—to spend a day and a night at Helsingsfors, and to convince myself that there, under the White Guard régime, the food situation is worse than in the *Sovtia*. There, it is true, the restaurants and shops are open and products at high prices are more accessible to the bourgeoisie; but, on the other hand, the poorer classes obtain much smaller and less regular supplies for their coupons.

In all, the Commissariats' new constructive work is being carried on feverishly, but, naturally, the practical administration is considerably behind the legislation. Perfect public order reigns in both capitals, and all reports of brigandage and murder in the streets are absolute fabrications. In Moscow the streets are full of people up to midnight. Not only the common inhabitants, but also the People's Commissioners go about in the night without any escort and without fear of attack.

Lenin has quite recovered from his illness, which has left absolutely no trace behind it, though the bullets have not yet been extracted. He speaks at meetings, even open-air meetings, as before.

Moscow is absolutely calm. In the processions in connection with the celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution almost the entire population took part. Even the bourgeoisie exhibits no sign of hostility or mischief-making. If it had not been for the secret hopes of the overthrow of the Soviets by the Allied armies, the bourgeoisie would have already reconciled itself to the new régime, and would have adapted itself to it. What is causing complaints is not the régime itself, but the corruption of individual officials, of which I spoke before. This, indeed, is our chief evil at present. It is the legacy of the Tsar's régime, intensified by the war and the increased cost of living caused by it. As such, it is no longer a specific Russian evil, but is well-nigh international, being rife in all countries of Western Europe, especially in Germany. Of course, this and other defects of the new régime can and will be eliminated, and, in spite of the gigantic difficulties in their way, the Soviets have, in the course of twelve months, carried out constructive work of colossal dimensions. The activity of the Commissariat of Public Instruction is evoking the admiration even of the bourgeoisie, more particularly the provision of hot breakfasts for all children in the schools. The theatres are working as before, and even the former Court actors and actresses have remained at their posts, being highly satisfied with the large measure of autonomy granted to them.

Factories can only be restarted according as raw material and fuel become available. The economic reconstruction is hampered, to a large extent, by the militarisation of the country. Having created a large army and carrying on a war at so many fronts, we are obliged, in a measure, to restore to its place of honour the old principle, "Everything for the war." Instead of using the available rolling stock for the conveyance of raw material and foodstuffs we are obliged to employ it for the transport of troops, food, and war material to the fronts. If you add to this the severe blockade by the Allies, who do not allow even neutral countries to supply us with the means of production, which they are prepared to exchange for our surplus stocks of raw material, you will understand that it is not the weakness of the Soviet régime, but our desire to restore healthy economic conditions in Russia, which has prompted our offer of peace to the Allies....

We are going to repeat it once again, and, if it is refused, there will be nothing left for us to do but to throw upon the Allied Governments the responsibility for the colossal bloodshed and the devastation of Russia which will inevitably result from their further intervention. Knowing as I do the feeling of the masses, I can confidently predict that in case the Allies or the White Guards, supported by them, should attempt to advance against Central Russia, they will not find any bourgeoisie left there: it will be exterminated to a man. Even now the Government finds it very difficult to restrain the popular wrath against the foreign and native bourgeoisie—the wrath caused by the rupture of diplomatic relations by the neutral Powers which have decided on this step mainly under the pressure of the Allied ultimata. However, the Soviet régime places its chief hope upon the working class in the Allied countries, which, it expects, will ultimately realise the real aims and objects of the intervention, which has now lost its former pretext of fighting the Germans....

[Received from The People's Russian Information Bureau.]

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STARVATION IN RUSSIA.

An Answer to Mr. Keeling.

The Westminster Gazette has discovered a certain Mr. H. V. Keeling, and on February 26th published an interview with him in which it is said that he returned from Russia on January 9th and that he, "alone probably of Englishmen, has seen the Bolshevik movement from within and can report from his own knowledge what the Russian working class think of it." *The Westminster Gazette* here ignores the testimony of Philips Price, Arthur Ransome, Reynolds Ball, and Dr. Rickman, all of whom have first-hand knowledge of the Soviet system, and all of whom have testified to the good work accomplished by the Bolsheviki.

But Mr. Keeling takes the opposite side: he is opposed to the Soviets and to the Bolsheviki. Therefore he is made much of by *The Westminster Gazette* and other capitalist newspapers, and his sole testimony is supposed to outweigh that of all the rest.

Mr. Keeling has much to say of the famine in Russia; he places the blame for it upon the Soviet Government. He entirely ignores the Allied intervention as a factor in the situation.

Mr. Keeling says: "I believe myself there is enough food in Russia to keep every one alive, for last harvest was very good, but it cannot be got and it is all being hoarded and concealed."

Lenin himself has said something rather like that. Lenin has said that grain is being hoarded whilst the people in the industrial districts are starving for lack of it, because those who have grown it refuse to sell at the standard price and desire to undermine the State bread monopoly which has been established to protect the poor. Mr. Keeling says: "The people who have got food won't sell it for roubles, because they are worth nothing and there is nothing to buy with them."

Why is there nothing to buy? Mr. Keeling refers to tobacco. Tobacco is grown in the south of Russia, and has not Mr. Churchill told us that we have an army of a certain size there and that this is a source of strength to General Denikin, to whom Britain is moreover sending arms, munitions, and equipment?

Mr. Reynolds Ball, who also has returned recently from Russia after a stay there dating from before the fall of the Czardom, tells us that oil is scarcely to be obtained for household use, either in town or country, and that the people improvise tapers which burn only for a few seconds. Coal also is terribly scarce. The Russian railway engines which normally burn oil now burn half oil, half wood. The trains are slow and infrequent. The oil shortage is due, of course, to the British troops and to the army of General Deniken in the Caucasus. Coal supplies are also held up by the counter-revolution, which is helped by the Allies. Interference with railway communications means interfering with supplies of all kinds. Hence, as Mr. Keeling says, "there is nothing to buy." And the food growers prefer to hoard it whilst their Russian brothers and sisters starve. In times of famine the naked brutality still existing in human nature is revealed. Mr. Hoover, when he was working with the American Relief Commission in Belgium before he became United States Food Controller, told us that the Belgian growers were also hoarders, although their countrymen and women were starving. In every country there are food hoarders and profiteers. They are the product of capitalism.

The foreign intervention in Russia has a two-fold result: it is the cause of there being "nothing to buy," and, at the same time, it causes the hoarders and the profiteers to believe that some day the Soviets may be overthrown. Therefore, instead of settling down to Socialism, they fight against it, and continue each to work for his own private interest instead of for the community as a whole.

Mr. Keeling gives another reason for famine in Russia. He says that the peasants are only doing as much work "as they must to keep themselves alive; and many of them are likely to live all this year on last year's harvest and what is being hoarded. The next harvest is likely to be very bad, and then the famine, which is now in the towns, will begin to spread to the country."

Mr. Reynolds Ball explains what Mr. Keeling has but superficially observed. He says that the peasants' land committees shared the land equally between the land workers, but that there was so little seed at the last sowing that few of the peasants were able to sow the amount of land allotted to them by the land committees. It was thought that there would be a great conflict at the sowing between the poor peasants who would sow their full share of land and the richer agriculturalists, whose old lands had been curtailed. But the shortage of seed for the time being obviated the conflict; the poor peasants could only sow a small part of the land allotted to them. The richer people—who, having more seed, could still sow more land than the poor, though not so much as in times of plenty—smiled and said: "The poor people think the extra land allotted to them is their's, but we shall see."

Mr. Keeling, according to *The Westminster Gazette*, asserts that the Bolsheviki maintain their power by providing food for those who "keep in with them" and starving those who do not. He says:—

> "The population was originally divided by the Bolsheviki into four categories which exactly turn upside down the social classes of other countries. These are (1) manual labourers; (2) clerical workers, provided they employ nobody; (3) everybody who has employed anybody....; (4) all the former idle rich, princes, aristocrats, landowners, courtiers, and rentiers of every description....in the last few months there has not been anything like enough for the first class, and scarcely anything for the others."

He adds that all children are in the first class, Class 4, Mr. Keeling thinks, has disappeared; some of its members have turned themselves into workmen to get food—an altogether desirable consummation, in our opinion! He adds:—

> "The other classes have got sorted into two classes; those that get some food and those who get hardly any officially."
>
> "You have cards and coupons very much as here, but all private trading is forbidden, and nearly all the shops in Petrograd are shut. To take their place there are a few hundred municipal shops, and you have to be registered at one of these and take your coupons there, if you are in the feeding class. You are supposed to receive half a pound of bread a day, and potatoes, butter, meat and sugar at reasonable prices; but as a matter of fact, for a long time past nothing has been sold but bread and even that failed for seven days in December. I have been six days without bread, and three days without anything to eat, except the so-called public dinner, which consists of watery soup, a small piece of very salt fish and one-eighth of a pound of bread. Sometimes they have offered me oats, as if I were a horse, when there is no bread. All the children are in the first class, for the Bolshevik idea is that all the children should be at the charge of the State while their parents go to work. But the children are starving all the same in great numbers."

Mr. Keeling did not like it; most naturally he would have preferred to live in a land of plenty where there is no war and no blockade. But how strange that he does not blame the counter-revolution and the Allied intervention which is causing this famine!

Mr. Keeling even objects to the attempts of the Soviet Government to secure an equal supply of food for the poor by rationing the supplies. He says:—

> "It makes it worse that you have quantities of money in your pocket, but can buy nothing. I have had roubles worth £600 according to old values, in my pocket, and not been able to buy a piece of bread."

Let us compare Mr. Keeling's statement with those of others. An American woman who came to this country from Russia this month says that she was in the third class, one of the classes that, according to Mr. Keeling, is not a "feeding class" and whose members, he says, "have to prowl about and try to get food secretly." This woman in the third class got ⅛ to ¼ of a lb. of bread every two days. Mr. Keeling and the other manual workers and children in the first class got ½ lb. of bread a day. In September, October, and November she did not receive the bread ration regularly. When it was not forthcoming rice or oats were supplied instead. She left Russia in December and returned in the New Year. In February the bread ration was supplied regularly. She could regularly obtain bread and thin soup for dinner. This woman was in the third class, but she was not condemned to starvation; she was eligible for certain rations at fixed prices. She could also buy unrationed food, including potatoes at 6½ roubles per lb. and meat at a very high price.

Mr. Keeling complains that it was declared illegal for people to buy flour privately in the country and bring it to the towns. This provision was made because the Soviet desired to establish a State bread monopoly and a uniform price in the interests of the poor.

The same American woman reports that the restrictions in this respect are now relaxed. Any one may now bring up to 2 poods of black flour into Moscow and sell it in the market place. Transport difficulties are so great that no extensive use is likely to be made of the permission to fetch food from the country. People have to fight their way into the trains and many lie on the top of the carriages or even ride on the buffers.

Food was fairly plentiful in the country, but it is growing less so owing to the influx of people who are leaving the towns in search of food and work. The population of Moscow is now reduced to one million.

In the schools the children are given a bowl of soup as a free lunch, and though the children are rationed in the highest category they are too hungry to learn for an hour before lunch. The orphanages are living from hand to mouth and the hospital patients are short of food.

This American woman makes the important statement that there is remarkably little crime in Soviet Russia. She saw not a single drunken man there. But travelling through the part of Siberia controlled by Koltchak in a train filled with soldiers in his army, she found that all were drunk, except the Chinese. Vodka under Koltchak's administration costs 15 roubles for 3 pints. The justification for selling vodka given by the Czecho-Slovak authorities who seized Samara, was that the only way to get money out of the peasants was to sell them vodka, and that the only people in Russia who had money were the peasants. When the Bolsheviki were in power in Samara notices were posted that any one found drunk would be shot. She thinks this proclamation was a warning never carried into effect. Such statements are interesting in view of the allegations that Bolshevism is synonymous with disorder, and that looting is part of the theory of Bolshevism. To those who reply that the fact that the death penalty is even threatened for looting reveals a disordered state of society, we must answer that ordered life and constructive work cannot fail to be disturbed by invasion and attacks by foreign troops, and that a naval and military blockade which turns scarcity into famine must inevitably arouse the ruthless, primitive instinct of self-preservation. But hear *The Times* on keeping order in Germany:—

> "This morning the announcement was made —not before it was time—that looters will be

Continued on page 1259.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH BILL.

This measure is being hailed as a great boon to the people; a veritable charter of security for the mothers and children of the country. But a scrutiny of the Bill provokes the exclamation: "How easily the people are gulled!" The Bill contains not one single provision to improve social conditions, not a single pledge to do anything. It merely transfers to the Ministry of Health the work of the Local Government Board, the Insurance Commissioners, the Board of Education, in respect of maternity and infant clinics, and other matters affecting the health of mothers and children under 5 years, the powers under the Midwives' Act, and the powers concerning infant life protection under the Children's Act of 1908. By Order in Council the medical inspection of children, the health of discharged officers and soldiers, and the treatment of lunatics and those who are mentally deficient may later be transferred to the Ministry of Health.

The Boards of Guardians, which are elected by popular vote, are abolished, and consultative councils may be set up to give the Ministry advice and assistance. Presumably the members of these councils are to be chosen by the Ministry, since no method of election is stated. Therefore the people are to lose what little control they have had over the administration of the Poor Law, which still remains as of yore. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that the poor widows, orphans, the aged and infirm will be better off than before. There is no reason to suppose that the mothers and children will be better cared for; not one single provision to benefit any of these people finds a place in the Bill. The only person who benefits under the Bill is the Minister of Health, who is to get £5,000 a year, instead of the £2,000 which used to be paid to the President of the Local Government Board. Ministerial salaries are showing a tendency to rise and the class of which Ministers are made is spared the hardships of the strike!

THE SHIPYARDS OFFERED TO LABOUR.

Mr. Bowerman, M.P., at the Conference between the Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies, said that the Government had paid the Labour Movement a great compliment in asking the movement to take over the shipyards started by the Government during the war. He thought it would be a great thing if the movement could do it, but it had not reached that stage yet.

It is remarkable that men, appointed like Mr. Bowerman to be custodians of the interests of the workers, do not realise that it is their duty to point out to the workers that capitalist Governments exist to maintain capitalism, and that offers are not made by them to Labour for the benefit of Labour but for the benefit of capital. It may be that in making that offer the Government which knows exactly what are the financial resources of the Co-operative and Trade Union movement, was aware Labour could not meet the payments involved.

It may be that the Government desired the Labour movement to assume responsibility for a few of the shipyards in order that these yards might enter into competition with the capitalist yards. Thus, in a subtle way, the Trade Union and Co-operative movement would obtain a vested interest against any strikes or wage demands of the workers in the shipbuilding industry. The result might be that the Labour movement would determine to overthrow capitalism altogether, but the Government probably thought that the chances were that it would not, especially as the Government is determined to place every obstacle in the way of the democratisation of the Trade Unions. The Government may have hoped on the other hand to secure the aid of all other sections of the workers in "maintaining order" amongst the shipyard workers.

THE POLICE.

The police are showing an excellent spirit in their negotiations with the Home Secretary. The Representative Board, which after their late strike was given to them as an alternative to recognition of the Union which was refused, is acting as though it were the Union. The Executive Committee has come into conflict with the Commissioner, the Commissioner has ordered the Board to elect another Executive but the Board stands by the Executive. At length the Home Secretary agreed to receive a deputation but refused to discuss with the deputation the question upon which it had come to see him. Meetings of the police have shown that the men stand solidly behind their Executive.

DOMESTIC SLAVERY.

We protest emphatically against the attempts being made by the Government to coerce women into domestic service, and public money being wasted in the effort to provide mistresses with maids. The unemployment donation may, so the Government announces, be refused to women who do not accept domestic employment. The Ministry of Reconstruction lately appointed a Women's Advisory Committee to inquire into the servant problem and this committee has now reported advocating the establishment of training schools in which little girls between 14 and 16 are to be trained as domestics. It is suggested that the training shall be provided at no greater cost to the parent than if the girl were entering a commercial or industrial calling. These schools will merely prove a useless expense as women are setting their faces against domestic service. It is a disgrace to Britain that a Government department should propose ending a girl's academic training at 14 as a measure of reconstruction. In Russia after the year 1920 no one under 20 years of age will be working for a living! At present education is compulsory in Russia up to 16 years.

THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' RIOT.

After Kinmel, the Strand; after Canadian soldiers, American. Why are the Canadian and American soldiers still detained here? Is it altogether a question of waiting for ships to take them home? Are they to be sent to Russia or to Germany? Are they to be used for labour disputes in the Allied countries? These questions stirring in the minds of the men longing to go home, together with the petty, irksome and coercive restrictions of the military machine, and the profiteering of which they are the victims, are breeding a spirit of turbulence and unrest amongst them.

As to the details of the Strand riot, the Americans seem to have had a substantial grievance: two of their number were arrested for playing dice and two for looking on at the game. Though the rulers of this country have decreed gambling, except on the Stock Exchange and by other capitalist methods, to be illegal, dice playing is not illegal in the United States. When civilians are arrested by the police (and this applies in America as well as in this country) they are expected to obey quietly and leave the question as to whether the arrest was justified to the decision of the Courts. But the military claim to be on a different footing: the American military police are said to have claimed the right to take over the prisoners. The police refused to give the prisoners up. Hence a fight developed, and as a result the methods of the police will be much examined and much criticised. If they had been attacking a crowd of workers, as they did in Glasgow, the powers that be and the bulk of the Press would have insisted that the police could do no wrong. We hope that no feud between the police and the Army and Navy, or between the British and American forces, will develop out of these conflicts. The workers in all the forces have a bigger enemy to fight than each other. Nevertheless, we must approve the solidarity the American soldiers and sailors have shown in refusing to allow their comrades to be punished unjustly.

IRISH INDEPENDENCE.

Very curious is the Home Rule Memorial to the King presented by Irish officers who fought with the British forces in the war. The Memorialists state that they joined the Army because Home Rule had been granted, yet immediately war broke out the Government suspended the Home Rule Act to secure the support of the Unionists. The memorialists say that their reliance on the Home Rule compact was ill-founded, and that their comrades who have given their lives in that reliance have made a sacrifice, fruitless up to the present of benefit for the fatherland that they loved. They urge that the Irish question shall be settled by the Peace Conference. They refer to Sinn Fein as "a violent emotional upheaval," and it is announced that Sinn Feiners were not asked to sign the memorial. These officers have, however, in large measure virtually admitted the Sinn Fein policy to be right; they have admitted that it was a mistake to fight in the war; they have adopted the Sinn Fein tactic of appealing to the Peace Conference, and though they still desire the Home Rule Act which Sinn Fein rejects, if these officers could have an experience of its working, they would probably denounce it with unqualified heartiness. We think it not improbable that they will shortly throw in their lot with Sinn Fein.

For our part, we are surprised that Sinn Fein should place reliance on what can be achieved at the Peace Conference, since it is obvious that the Peace Conference is dominated by the Council of Ten and that the Council of Ten is quite prepared to accommodate each other on little matters of this kind.

We think that Sinn Fein will do well to continue its old policy of self-reliance, and particularly to develop in Ireland the power of combined industrial action. Irish Socialists will no doubt keep plainly before the Irish workers the fact that they must free themselves from Irish as well as from British capitalism.

DAVID RAMSAY and W. F. WATSON.

SCOOPING UP THE "BOLSHEVISTS."

The trial of David Ramsay was terminated on Saturday, March 8th, at Bow Street. He was found guilty of "sedition," and condemned to five months second division, *without the option of a fine.*

We believe the Government is determined to crush the revolutionary workers' movement. Five months' imprisonment for a speech for David Ramsay, and now Watson is arrested for his speech at the Albert Hall last month. His case came before Sir John Dickinson at 3.30 on March 8th. The public was excluded from the Court during the trial, which, like David Ramsay's, was for "sedition." Bail was granted, although Watson did not ask for it. But he *did ask* to communicate with friends outside the Court who were willing to go bail, this was *refused*. Watson, therefore, handed in two names of friends who might go bail at 3.40 p.m., Saturday, but one was out, and the second was not visited till 4.30 p.m. The authorities appeared to wish to inconvenience Watson by landing him in Brixton for the week-end, and in spite of the assurance given to friends outside the Court that he would remain at Bow Street till midnight, he was removed to Brixton at 5.10 p.m.

Many comrades and friends were at the Court early on Monday; but the authorities had some fault to find with practically every security offered. It was 4.30 p.m. Monday before Watson was released from Brixton. Watson's case is fixed for to-day (Saturday), at 2 p.m., at Bow Steeet; he will defend himself. All friends anxious to act as witnesses are asked to meet at 7, Featherstone Buildings, on Friday 14th, at 7.30 p.m. We urge all interested—and every supporter of free speech should be—to come to Bow Street to encourage Watson by their presence. *Now* is the time to make a stand.

We must see to it that the movement rallies to the support of those who are dependent upon our comrades, and donations towards this object addressed to the Revolutionary Comrades' Fund will be gladly received by the editor of this paper until, as we anticipate, a special committee has been formed to attend to this matter. But conscience and the sense of logic should remind all of us that we cannot thus buy ourselves out of the duty of doing our part in the revolutionary work. Victimisation will continue and will increase until capitalism is overthrown. On with the educational work; on with the perfecting of the rank and file organisation; on with fearless creative thought which shall lead to vigorous action.

As an instance of the promptitude of the arm of the law, the offices of the L.W.C. were visited by eight men within half-an-hour of Watson's remand. The raiding party removed property from the premises in no way connected with the case!

POPLAR SOCIALIST SUNDAY SCHOOL
Re-opens on SUNDAY, 16th MARCH, at 3.30,
AT 296, HIGH STREET, POPLAR, E.14.
WHEN
COM. J. BROWN and COM. FARRELL
WILL SPEAK.
JOHN LAVIS, *Supt.* E. R. FLEMING, *Sec.*

TORTURING THE C.O.s.

(Continued from front page)

between the two cases was this: *Franklin was a relative of a Cabinet Minister, whereas McDougall was only a poor lad.*

Mr. William Ball was a friend of McDougall. He regarded the divergences of sentence as a political and social outrage, and, by way of protest broke a Government office window. He was sentenced to two months' hard labour as a result. Ball insisted that his offence was a political one as it unquestionably was. No heed was given to his protest, however, and he accordingly went on hunger-strike. Just imagine what now happened! Just think over the cant and hypocrisy of our capitalist present-day civilisation! Christmas Day is supposed to be Christ's birthday. In reality, as we all know, it is nothing of the kind. It is merely a day that signifies the Pagan corruption of the Christian Church and the perpetuation of Pagan Solarism in the terms of conventional Christian unbelief. However, custom and pre-Christian folk-lore have associated all sorts of sentimental traditions with this day, although such traditions have little effect on the realities of human suffering. In prison, our unfortunates are marched to church, often amidst the shouting and curses of warders and wardresses, who represent, often-times, the most vulgar, sordid, and despicable, if pathetic, offshoots of our miserable civilisation. This is not a true description of every warder and wardress. But it does stand true of the prison official as a type or average. The recent tendency they have exhibited, however, to identify themselves with the labour movement is a hopeful sign and promises an end to their willingness blindly to serve the system. But we must speak of them as they are, and forget that, if they dared, they would act nobler sometimes than their job permits.

Cravens before those placed above them by authority, but not merit! Petty tyrants over those unfortunates delivered into their hands by economic causes and legal hypocrisy! Yet afraid of the individual whose rebel soul is the one noble thing that blossoms, proud and defiant, in the atmosphere of the prison hell! Compelled curs are these agents of our system, ever forced, willing or unwilling, to silence the friends of the miserable victims of judges' spleen! What instances one could give if only space permitted!

The church service in prison is a ludicrous piece of blasphemy, to which, during my incarcerations, I have refused to go. Warders, with solemn faces and in bullying attitudes, bid prisoners, whose souls the social system has corrupted and the prison system quite destroyed, follow the hireling foot-knave of a chaplain when he is dilating on the sufferings of Christ and the joys of God! Let any prisoner but possess spiritual understanding, let him but boast a soul which revolts against the knavery of the system that has gagged him, and his spirit will be consumed with rage, until he will want to tear the heart out of some hideous-garbed warder near him, strangle the life out of some soul-assassin who is preaching up platitudes, and stand erect with hand uplifted over the miserable form of the craven prison governor, who acts as sidesman and reads the lessons!

It was on Christmas Day, 1911, then, when this piece of cant had ended, and the Christmas tracts and usual fare had been distributed—for they hand round tracts, but give no different food at this "joyful" season—that Mr. Ball was submitted to forcible feeding. For five and a half weeks this treatment was continued, and although Mr. Ball was strong enough physically to remain alive under this disgusting treatment, his mentality weakened and he was driven temporarily insane.

Mr. Ball complained, whilst being fed forcibly and for long after, of electricity and noises in his head. Driven mad by hirelings, under a system of barbarous torture and secret despotism, he was removed to a lunatic asylum as a pauper lunatic, without his wife being consulted. Subsequently, this iniquity was righted to some extent: but that such a barbarous procedure was possible serves as some index to the sufferings that must fall to the lot of a friendless prisoner.

It is pretended, in defence of the prison system, that all this barbarism is essential to discipline, and that discipline is necessary to reform. This is but the red-tape way of spelling slavery: and under all circumstances, as so many members of the Police and Prison Officers' Union know only too well, slavery breeds vice and not virtue. Discipline, as a trade job, trampling on every human principle for a hireling wage, is productive of so much evil, that it adopts secrecy because it fears a public exposure of its corruption. As a victim of its oppression, I demand that the public, the common people without the prison walls, shall not allow us to suffer in silence and secrecy. I insist that they shall not petition whilst we are being tortured to our graves. I insist that they shall act. The only way with despotism is to fight and to expose it, never to plead with it.

Mr. Bonar Law has declared that the Government will not release the C.O.s. Therefore, the men are to die in prison. And those of us who persist in resisting are to die in agonies of torture after three years' failure to destroy either our faith or our resistance. Mr. Shortt, to justify this torture, declares that we men who decline to be slaves are not C.O.s, notwithstanding even the findings of the Government's own precious tribunals. Of course we are not. It is not conscientious, from a Government's standpoint, to resist! Our duty is to submit to illegal imprisonment for all eternity, just to please the bogus manipulator and exploiter of a bogus Irish plot story. Mr. Shortt blames the War Office! And the War Office blames Mr. Shortt! Meanwhile, the parliamentary era draws to its close and the days of the Soviet approach!

But what is labour outside the prison walls going to do to aid the men who are striving, fighting, dying for liberty and brotherhood within the prison walls? We are giving our lives to the cause. We are resisting servitude. We are checking, by our work, discipline, and hunger strikes in prison, the Government's power to impose further conscription upon the workers. We are checking its power to make war on the Russian Workers' Republic. And you, who have escaped or evaded imprisonment and the sufferings which have been ours for three years, yet profess our Socialist faith: What, I ask, are you going to do to put an end to the fiendish torture which has been exposed in this article? Comrades, I leave the question to your conscience and to your solidarity, and I resume calmly my place in the fight. Act—and act soon. Put aside resolutions. Display with us, instead, resolution. *Demand and secure* our freedom that, with you, we may triumphantly assist in the inauguration of the Social Revolution.

EQUALITY.

A munition worker writes: "On and from the 28th December last a rise of 5*s*. per week was given to munition workers. The men have received their rise, but the women have *not* received it and have been discharged without getting it. . . . . Now, since the money is due, why is it not paid? And since we are no longer needed is that any reason why they should stop our money?"

CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR EDITOR,—In THE WORKER'S DREADNOUGHT, of March 1st, page 1239, appears an article by W. F. Watson, 'What means this Strike?' At the bottom of the article in question, appears the printer's footnote, which runs as follows: "If any of the men here took upon themselves to hold a meeting without my permission, during time they had contracted to work for the firm, I should consider I had the right to terminate their engagement at once for breach of contract.—J. Edward Francis (The Athenæum Press)."

May I, as one of the employees at the above firm be allowed the opportunity of criticising that statement, as it involves one of the most essentail points in the Socialist movement, viz., the emancipation of Labour from the domination of Capitalism, for that is precisely what Mr. Francis's statement amounts to. Domination. Supposing Labour had economic security in the shape of income or freehold homes, with sufficient land attached to supply the worker and his dependants with food; or, again, there was a scarcity of Labour such as happened after the Black Death 1348, I make bold to state that the tone of Mr. Francis and the remainder of the capitalist class would undergo a complete change, because the power would be on the side of Labour, whereas to-day it is on the side of Capital—with unemployment, armies, bullets and bayonets to back it up. But injustice will not last for ever. Millions of lives may yet have to be sacrificed before the end of this abominable system comes, for it is just these little footnotes that reveal the mind of the Capitalist, in spite of the fact that that particular Capitalist professes to hold Socialist views, such as, from each according to ability to each according to their needs, as does Mr. Francis. And in conclusion, I say it is easier for a camel to crawl through the eye of a needle, than for a Capitalist to understand Socialism as the class-conscious workers understand it.—Yours, &c.,

W. R. HALLS.

[We entirely agree with Mr. Halls. Would Mr. Francis explain in a subsequent issue, what contract the workers in question broke, and how the workers could have guarded against such breach in taking up their employment?—Editor THE WORKER'S DREADNOUGHT.]

My point was "breach of contract." Practically all contracts between Capital and Labour are onerous to Labour, but the remedy is, in my opinion, to refuse to make such contracts, not having made them, to break them.

J. E. FRANCIS (*Athenæum Press*).

THE AFFRAY AT KINMEL CAMP.

The authorities broke their promises concerning the Canadian soldiers' return home. The Canadians used milder methods of securing their freedom to return home than the Government expected them to use in fighting its war. Now the Government announces that the soldiers will be "rigorously dealt with." Five men have been killed and one of them is said to be a Russian. Therefore it is said that the outbreak was a case of Bolshevism. The accounts of the affair at present available are conflicting. From some of the statements it appears that the rioters were fired on to prevent them getting at the records. *The Times* says: "Shots were fired on both sides, not by volleys but singly, with the intention of picking off particular men, and one of the first to fall was the Russian with the red flag." Whether the authorities fired on the men to stop damage to property, whether the attack was mutual is not at present clear. But one thing is certain: if there was any Bolshevik feeling in the camp it was not expressed by the drinking and dressing up which seems to have accompanied the disturbance, and it could not be satisfied by any such palliative as speedier demobilisation, for Bolshevism aims at the establishment of the Socialist Republic. *The Daily News* states that the ringleaders were "spotted by non-commissioned officers camouflaged as drunken privates." Such methods used to be called "Russian" or "Czarist." We now understand that they are the methods employed by all autocratic governments when they believe their rule is threatened.

THE FRENCH WAY.

Volksstimme, February 10th, reports wholesale destruction by the French troops of occupation quartered in the chemical factory, Maingau, near Hattersheim. All the machinery and many fixtures were damaged beyond repair. No redress could be got by the German authorities from the French military command, and the French soldiers declared that they meant to have their revenge for the destruction in France.

* * *

Der Bund (Swiss Federal) February 11th.—According to news received from New York *via* Rotterham the blockade of Germany is to be raised about the middle of April. Japan declares that it is not bound beyond that date. America is pressing for the raising of the blockade. The Trade Department has invited firms to make preparations for sending goods to Germany. The Government will control methods of payment to avoid speculation and undesirable methods of payment.

POINTS FROM THE COAL COMMISSION.

Some 20*s*. steel shares stand at 100*s*. having advanced during the past month. The dividend paid by the majority of iron and steel companies is 15 to 25 per cent.

The royalty on a ton of coal is 6*d*. that means 2*s*. on a ton of steel.

The total royalties on steel are 10*s*. 10*d*, per ton.

AUSTRALIA'S BOLSHEVIK CONSUL IMPRISONED.

Peter Semonoff, Bolshevik consul in Sydney, has been ordered to pay two fines and costs or go to prison for two consecutive terms of 6 months for his Socialist speeches.

* * *

The navy estimates for 1919–20 amount to £149,000,000. Another three millions a day to be spent in useless and criminal expenditure!

STARVATION IN RUSSIA.

continued from page 1256.

summarily shot, and their names posted on red placards, which very faintly recalls Robespierre's "names of the condemned."

The blockade of Germany and the blockade of Russia are responsible for untold misery and disorder. And as "Necessity is the mother of Invention," they are hastening the development of new forms of social structure, new ways of life.

Another witness, just returned from Russia, a middle-class man of wide experience, who has been engaged in relief work there, also reports that black bread is brought from the country to sell in the town market. Thus sold its price is enormously high, 15 roubles a funt, which is about a lb. Butter may also be brought in and sold in the same way; it costs 100 roubles per pood (36 lbs.). Sugar is 60 roubles a funt. Pork is 60 roubles per funt. These are sold, of course, outside and extra to the rationing scheme.

We should have preferred to learn that all food in Russia had been rationed during the scarcity and sold at a uniform price. Mr. Reynolds Ball tells us that one can go into the restaurants there, as here, and buy good meals at high cost. But the general levelling up of wages has obviated the hardships that occur here, and the reign of equality only replaces that of inequality at the cost of much struggle.

The Englishman above referred to, who this month has returned from Russia, says that Tcherkoff, the Secretary of the Tolstoyan Society in Russia, told him there is an unexampled demand at the present time for Tolstoyan lectures. The congregations are leaving the churches to attend Tolstoyan lectures. The Tolstoyan lecturers travel side by side with the lecturers sent out by the Soviets, and the people prefer the Tolstoyan lectures. This view is of course that of a Tolstoy partisan; nevertheless, it is extremely interesting, and there is room for speculation as to whether those who prefer the Tolstoyan lectures to the lectures organised by the Soviets, have passed from the churches to that which they find easiest of comprehension and are not yet so far advanced as to be ready for the Soviet lectures, or whether they have graduated from the Soviet school to the Tolstoyan school.

This witness further records that, in spite of Russia's urgent need, in face of invasion by the Allied Powers and attacks by internal counter-revolutionaries, the conscientious objector has only to state that he has a conscientious objection to warfare to procure exemption from military service. This fact and that the Tolstoyan lecturers are travelling freely around, and lecturing side by side with the Soviet representatives, are further proofs of the gross untruthfulness of the oft-repeated story, that ideas are as rigorously censored under Bolshevism as they were under the Czardom.

The same British witness tells that the Russian press publishes free criticism of the Government Departments. He says that there is a speeding up of work in the Government Departments and that the clerks are now obliged to come punctually in the morning, "a great thing in Russia." He also records the joining up of parties to aid in the Soviet administration. Even members of the Right Social Revolutionary Party are giving their aid. He says that efficient people of upright character and high attainments are being attracted to work in the Government Departments. He adds that there is remarkably little crime and that he saw no drunkenness in Soviet Russia.

Mr. Keeling admits that when the peasants divided the land:—

"On the whole they did it quite sensibly, each taking a bit of the better land, and then another bit of the worse, and in the same way arranging the forest rights between them."

But he says:—

"The trouble is that while there is plenty of land in one village, there is nothing like enough in another, so the distribution is very unequal, and there is great discontent in consequence."

Mr. Keeling seems to see things without endeavouring to understand them. In every country save Russia the unequal distribution of land is the established legal order, and "there is great discontent in consequence." In Russia the established legal order is that land shall be distributed equally to those who will work it; but, as yet, the equalisation has been only partially carried out. Decrees may be passed in a day, but their realisation takes time; and all sorts of unexpected obstacles will obtrude themselves, and must be overcome. Mr. Reynolds Ball says that the people flocking from the towns to settle in the country keep to the villages along the railway lines and tend to overcrowd them; they appear to be afraid to go further afield into the country. That would seem to be a natural instinct of town dwellers, especially in time of war. Naturally, too, the old inhabitants of the village remain and do not start off to find new homes because the newcomers have arrived. The latest witness from Russia makes the same observation; people are flocking from the towns into the country. They are swamping the villages along the railway lines; they do not penetrate into the steppes. Therefore, although the land around the villages by the railways has been partitioned according to the number of men in the family, owing to the fact that the population here has been unduly swollen, the original dwellers there have now, in some cases, less land than before.

But what is the remedy? Is it to return to the old régime? To do so would be a gigantic folly. The remedy is to extend the area of settled communities; to extend the railway lines; to provide more housing and other facilities, which no doubt are lacking in the far steppes; also to check the unduly hasty exodus from the towns by providing them with food and the raw material necessary to carry on industrial work. Then there will no longer be "nothing for the peasants to buy" in exchange for their produce.

But whilst Soviet Russia is wasting her energy and substance on warfare forced on her by the Allies; whilst she is blockaded by hostile forces on land and sea, the development which the change in her social organism imperatively demands is grievously retarded.

The Russian people are fully aware of this; from this cause sprang the truce in the trenches of the early days of 1917. From this cause also sprang the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations, the acceptance of the German terms, and many another sacrifice. Mr. Reynolds Ball tells us that when war began between the Cossacks and the Soviets, there was manifest reluctance amongst the rank and file of both sides. The Cossacks were anxious to be working upon their land, the Bolsheviki were filled with the sense that fighting is horrible and destructive. But the counter-revolutionaries would have war!

And Mr. Keeling, though he is sorry for the "enormous suffering," and though he says: "I have no personal animosity against the Bolsheviks; they treated me as well as they could," is allowing himself to be used to popularise counter-revolutionary intervention, and to remove the scruples of those in Britain who are reluctant to agree to a wanton and unprovoked war upon the Workers' Government of Russia.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

Parliament As We See It.

March 3rd.—Those entering the military massage service must sign an agreement which empowers the officer to give a month's notice during the year's service. The masseuse, however, has no such right. This anomaly Mr. Churchill explained was necessary in order to secure continuity of service. But what if the masseuse has a grievance and wants to go?

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS!

On the question of Army Estimates Mr. Churchill waxed eloquent. He went into details of the manner in which future wars might be waged, despite the "victorious" end of the "war to end war." The story of Russia and the position there was given in a way which showed that the Allies were really doing a work of great self sacrifice in helping Russia! Mr. Churchill succeeded in giving a perverted version of the Czecho-Slovak adventures there—he has evidently disdained to read the truth given by Dr. Rickman and other men recently returned from Russia. His words on the German situation should be printed in red and pushed down the throats of all those hypocrites who talk about "German atrocities," or as they now are "Bolshevik." He said: "*We are holding all our means of coercion in full operation or in immediate readiness for use. We are enforcing the blockade with rigour. We have strong armies ready to advance at the shortest notice. Germany is very near starvation.* All the evidence I have received from officers sent by the War Office all over Germany shows, first of all, the great privations which the German people are suffering, and, secondly, the danger of a collapse of the entire structure of German social and national life under the pressure of hunger and malnutrition. *Now, is therefore the moment to settle.*" Is it possible to believe that a human being *can* be so base as to make such statements in cold blood. Evidently the representatives of British people want sentiments such as these and Mr. Churchill knows his audience!

WAR WAGES.

March 4th.—Women, Mr. Spoor said, working in the Women's Forestry Corps near Hutton, Rudby, Yorks., are paid 25*s.* a week. They are frequently kept working in bad weather, in soaked clothes. Their billet costs 17*s.* a week and insurance 3*d.*, whilst the food is insufficient. Mr. Bridgeman for the Government explained that since the Armistice these girls are allowed to take their discharge should they wish!

HUMOUR.

March 5th.—It transpired that in Egypt it is contemplated to exclude the English language from the Egyptian Courts of Law. What affrontery on the part of those peoples who have been "helped" by the British Government!

THE LABOUR MEMBER.

Mr. Adamson (Lab.) pointed out the anomalies which arise from not being able to take the oath on the opening of Parliament. Although it may be no fault of the member, he is deprived of a salary until he takes the oath. He further put in a plea for travelling expenses which sometimes amount to £200 a year! Mr. C. White (Lab.) explained in detail how these money difficulties affect the working-man member and said "I have not a shilling in the world, or only a few shillings until I get my salary."

A DISGRACE!

The case of the 1,500 men in prison for conscience sake was well put by Colonel Wedgwood (L.). He cited cases of wanton cruelty. For instance, in Newcastle several C.O.s were forcibly fed, *and all with the same tube.* They were not allowed clean tubes for each man; one was suffering from tuberculosis, another from a disease of the nose! A new governor, he told the House, has been appointed in Wandsworth. Colonel Wedgwood read a letter in which occurred the following first greetings of the new governor to the C.O.s: "I will not have these stinking C.O.s mixed up with respectable men." One of the chaps who merely said: "Thank you, Sir" to this insult was taken to a strong room and put in irons. Then the Governor said: "I have full power from the Secretary of State." "To hell with the C.O.s, to hell with them." "Look at that bloody swine," were other polite phrases used by this "officer and gentleman."

INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA.

March 6th.—Colonel Wedgwood (L.) called attention to the manifesto of the Social Revolutionary party and the Menshevik party protesting against foreign intervention in Russia. From the remarks made on behalf of the Government it seemed that Mr. Balfour persists in his boycott of the press, and apparently his assistants also refuse to read it!

CONSCRIPTION.

The Naval, Military and Air Force Service Bill was given a second Reading not however without an attempt being made by the Labour Party to open the eyes of the workers to this new way of foisting conscription on the country. Mr. J. H. Thomas (Lab.) moved that: "This House declines to assent to the Second Reading of a Bill which is contrary to the oft-repeated pledges given by Ministers during the passage of the previous Military Service Bills, and is not in conformity with the declared policy of the Government, at the General Election." The motion was put to a division, the voting resulting in 304 against and 71 in favour; 5 of these latter were Coalition Liberals. Both Mr. Churchill and Mr. Bonar Law ridiculed the idea that an innocent Bill introduced to "secure the fruits of the war" had any bearing on conscription. But what better proof of the reality than a Government denial! Endless instances might be cited of "pledges" made only to be broken.

M. O'C.

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LONDON MEETINGS.

OUTDOOR.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14th.
The Square, Woolwich.—11.30 A.M., Mrs. Walker.
Pretoria Avenue, Walthamstow.—5.30 P.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15th.
Tottenham.—Meet at 3 and 6.30 P.M. at West Green Road, corner of High Road. Speakers: Miss Price, Mrs. Walker, John Blythe.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16th.
Osborn Street, Whitechapel.—11.45 A.M., Mrs. Walker.
The Grove, Hammersmith. — 7 P.M., Miss Price.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18th.
Tower Hill.—12 (NOON), Miss Price.

FRIDAY, MARCH 21st.
The Square, Woolwich.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22nd.
Great Push in Waterloo Road.

INDOOR.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16th.
20, Railway Street, Poplar W.S.F.—7 P.M., John Syme, 'British Simpletons.' Chair: Mrs. Cressall. Discussion.

MONDAY, MARCH 17th.
44, Malden Road, St. Pancras W.S.F.—2.30 P.M., Business Meeting.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20th.
20, Railway Street, Poplar W.S.F. Study Circle. 8 P.M., Mr. Edmunds, 'Marxian Economics.'

FRIDAY, MARCH 21st.
400, Old Ford Road.—8 P.M., General Meeting (London Section).

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18th.
Walthamstow League of Rights, William Morris Hall, Somers Road.—2.30 P.M., Miss Horsfall.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14th and 21st.
East London Workers' Committee, 400, Old Ford Road.—7.30 P.M.

FEDERATION NOTES.

BOW.—*Hon. Sec.*, N. Smyth, 400, Old Ford Road.—Members' Meeting, Wednesday, March 19, at 8 P.M. Members whose subscriptions are due are asked to send them in this week. A Social and Dance will be held on Saturday, March 22nd, at 7 P.M. in aid of the General Fund. Contributions towards the refreshments will be gratefully received by Miss L. Burgis at above address.

POPLAR.—*Hon. Sec.*, Miss E. Lagsding, 20, Railway Street, E.14. Economic Classes are held every Thursday at 8 P.M. Interesting discussion.

Gratefully Acknowledged

GENERAL FUND.—Irene per Mrs. Drake (weekly), £1; Mrs. D'Arcy Hamilton, 13*s.* 1*d.*; Mr. J. Y. per Mr. Bowman, 5*s.* 2*d.*

SOCIAL WORK.—Nursery Social, £4 8*s.* 1*d.*; Mrs. Baillie-Weaver (monthly), £2 10*s.*; Mrs. Boswell (monthly), £2; Misses Gulland (monthly), £1 15*s.*; per Miss J. E. Weir (monthly), £1; Mrs. Usherwood, 12*s.*; Miss C. Cottrell (annual), 10*s*; Nurse Hebbes (weekly), 10*s.*; Mr. A. Potter, 3*s.* 8*d.*

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SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR THE ARMY.

G. Hurd writes:—

"After an absence of four years from civilian life, during which period I have passed through many phases of military life from rifleman to cadet, I have come to the conclusion that it is only just that the Authorities who have so repeatedly told us of our "splendid democratic victory" should allow those men in the ranks who have made that victory possible, a voice in the management of the army with regard to such important matters as discipline, pay, and the general welfare of the men, &c. These representatives to be freely elected by the men.

I once remember being appointed company representative on the battalion messing committee. This body consisted of the Colonel—a genial but stern man— the Major, four or five officers, the regimental sergeant major, four quartermaster-sergeants, and four riflemen, myself in the last group.

We had orders to attend "C.O.s orders" at 12.30; we marched into a cold desolate sort of room, as if on parade, and faced the Colonel with a click of the heels, the R.S.M. glaring at us as if we were prisoners under escort, which we very much felt like. I am quite sure, even to this day, that if I had then spoken, I should have received some punishment for having the audacity to speak in such distinguished company. I do not suggest this sort of representation, what I mean is for free men to meet men as such and not like military slaves. The present system is unjust, servile, and a mockery, which must be altered at once.

Whilst we see so many institutions, industrial, political and economic all in the melting pot of reconstruction, it is important that we watch the army in its unjust methods, and sometimes tyrannous action in so many matters. So many men have recently passed through the army machine, that I am confident that the democratisation of the army, not only in its internal management, but as to its future policy for the reshaping of that "new England" which all enlightened people want, is eminent.

[We advise our correspondent to communicate with the secretary of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Union.]

SAM GOMPER'S FEDERATION.

The Rev. Charles Eaton having made an extensive tour of American shipyards said he could affirm that "the American Federation of Labour is one of the great Conservative forces of the United States: it is anti-Socialist, anti-Bolshevik and anti-Anarchist."

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